



University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

This paper is made available online in accordance with publisher policies. Please scroll down to view the document itself. Please refer to the repository record for this item and our policy information available from the repository home page for further information.

To see the final version of this paper please visit the publisher's website. Access to the published version may require a subscription.

Author(s): Marilyn Hunt

Article Title: Learners' perceptions of their experiences of learning subject content through a foreign language

Year of publication: 2011

Link to published article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2011.571765>

Publisher statement: This is an electronic version of an article published in Hunt, M. (2011). Learners' perceptions of their experiences of learning subject content through a foreign language. *Educational Review*, Vol. 63(3), pp. 365-378. *Educational Review* is available online at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cedr20/63/3>

**Learners' perceptions of their experiences of learning subject content
through a foreign language**

Learners' perceptions of their experiences of learning subject content through a foreign language

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL, the teaching of another curriculum subject through a foreign language), although more widespread in Europe, is still relatively innovative in England. Since the government's decision to remove the requirement for all pupils to learn a foreign language at key stage 4 (ages 14-16) the numbers of pupils opting to study a foreign language have decreased dramatically. This indicates low level motivation for language learning in England. This research involved the training of secondary Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) trainee teachers in the CLIL approach during their initial teacher training with a broader aim of increasing learners' enthusiasm for languages through more interesting and challenging content. This article investigates learners' perceptions of learning content through a language, their enjoyment, progress and motivation.

Keywords: learners' perceptions; CLIL; motivation for learning languages

Introduction

The findings reported here form part of a larger research project to develop and enhance Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) practice in schools by developing training on the CLIL approach for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) primary and secondary trainee teachers during their Initial Teacher Training at a University. The aims of the project were to encourage the PGCE primary and secondary trainee teachers to engage in innovative practice by teaching a school subject through the medium of French, Spanish or German during their final school placement with the broader goal of enthusing learners with a love of languages through more interesting and challenging content. Concern has been mounting about learners' lack of motivation for languages. National statistics demonstrate that dramatic decreases in the number of pupils taking a language GCSE in England took place from 2004 to 2006 (CILT 2009), following the government's decision in England (DfES 2002) to remove the requirement for all pupils to learn a foreign language at key stage 4 (ages 14-16). Finding ways to motivate learners to learn languages is becoming increasingly important and the CLIL approach could be one possible solution. Wakefield and Pumfrey (2009) argue convincingly that in curriculum evaluation and development the views of learners are important, but often

overlooked. This article examines learners' perceptions of their experiences of learning through this innovative approach to gauge their reactions to learning subject content through a language, their enjoyment, progress, evaluation of the activities and resources encountered and their motivation.

International research on the development of CLIL

A range of models of bilingual education or immersion programmes have been developed with varied priorities, aims and outcomes. Coyle (2007, 543) describes it as 'a complex business involving wide-ranging variables in very diverse contexts, rooted in historical and sociopolitical developments'. These variables might include the subject and language, the teacher (subject teacher teaching through a language or languages teacher teaching content), pilot projects or mainstream education, as a result of historical contexts to develop intercultural competence and break down historical barriers; or socio-political developments, for example, the revitalisation and maintenance of a severely declining Gaelic-speaking community in Scotland. One of the most important areas relevant to this research is the experience of French immersion programmes developed in Canada since the 1960s. These were designed primarily 'to provide Canada's majority-group English-speaking learners with opportunities to learn Canada's other official language' (Genesee 1994, 1). These programmes, based on teaching subjects in French to English mother tongue children, were the first to be evaluated through intensive long-term research. Cummins (1999) summed up the positive results of this research over 30 years which revealed that learners gain fluency and literacy in French with no detriment to their English academic skills; that there is no evidence of any long-term delay in mastering subject matter taught through French and with respect to French skills, by the end of elementary school (grade 6) learners are close to the level of native speakers in understanding and reading French, although their expressive skills of spoken and written French are less well developed. Although the Canadian experience may not be directly transferable to Europe, valuable research and experimental activity have arisen from it.

Immersion classrooms have frequently been used across Europe to integrate immigrant learners into mainstream education; however, the use of a foreign language as the medium for teaching and learning other subjects is a more recent development and this approach has become increasingly popular, especially so in Europe, for

example, France, Poland and Slovakia, where bilingual streams have existed for some years. Interest in bilingual education methodologies started to increase in Europe in the 1990s due to European socio-economic integration and globalization. Council of Europe activities developed the trend and in 1996 the term CLIL was introduced (CLIL compendium). Marsh (2002, 15) defines CLIL as ‘any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content’. Whilst the teaching is focused on content, the purpose for language use is authentic and language is assimilated naturally which can boost learners’ motivation to learn languages.

The Action Plan 2004-2006 (Commission of the European Communities 2003, 7) recognized the benefits of CLIL in contributing to the Union’s language learning goals:

It can provide effective opportunities for pupils to use their new language skills now, rather than learn them now for use later. It opens doors on languages for a broader range of learners, nurturing self-confidence in young learners and those who have not responded well to formal language instruction in general education. It provides exposure to the language without requiring extra time in the curriculum,... (Action Plan 2004-6, 8)

Since then the Socrates programme LINGUA (Action 2) funded a series of transnational projects for the development and dissemination of methodologies for teaching subjects through languages other than lingua francas and the Socrates COMENIUS-Programme (Action 1) funded school projects aiming to support the introduction of a CLIL approach. A Eurydice publication (2006) analyses CLIL provision in the education system, reporting on the status of languages and levels of education concerned, investigating the aims and range of subjects taught through a foreign language and the evaluation and certification on offer. It also reports on pilot projects, recruitment criteria and training for teachers and factors which may inhibit the general implementation of CLIL. In this 2006 report the bulk of school-based CLIL programmes focus on the (upper) secondary level where it is appreciated as an innovative and additional method for learners to practise and extend their second or foreign language in a variety of subject areas. In the 2008 review CLIL is reported to

exist in both primary and general secondary education in the great majority of European countries but it is not widespread (Eurydice, 2008)

A qualitative evidence base was established in the late 1990s through a range of classroom based studies which showed that in certain specific contexts CLIL brings particular benefits. Coyle (2007, 548) sums up the benefits outlined in these studies stating that

‘....CLIL can and does raise learner linguistic competence and confidence; raise teacher and learner expectations; develop risk-taking and problem-solving skills in the learner; increase vocabulary learning skills and grammatical awareness; motivate and encourage student independence; take students beyond ‘reductive’ foreign language topics; improve L1 literacy; encourage linguistic spontaneity (talk) if students are enabled to learn through the language rather than in the language; develop study skills, concentration (learning how to learn through the language is fundamental to CLIL); generate positive attitudes and address gender issues in motivation; and put cultural awareness back on the agenda.’

Furthermore Krashen and Terrell (cited in Hood and Tobutt 2009, 48) claim that language is acquired more naturally through this approach: ‘if we mirror immersion techniques we will more acquire (a natural process) than have to learn (an artificial one)’. Supporters believe that CLIL will produce ‘natural language ‘users’ rather than only as one word-level learners tied to a diet of survival topics’ (Hood & Tobutt 2009, 211).

The development of CLIL in England

The context for language learning in the UK, as an English speaking country, is considerably different from other European countries where there is greater motivation to learn English as a lingua franca and possibly for tertiary education. However, there has been a growing interest in CLIL starting with the recommendation in The Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000) that there should be a nationally co-ordinated programme of bilingual learning in the UK. Subsequently the CLIL approach was piloted in eight project schools including both primary and secondary from 2002-5 in the Content and Language Integration Project (CLIP) led by CILT (now the National Centre for Languages, the UK government's centre of expertise on languages) and the University of Nottingham. CILT (2008) reports that schools using the CLIL approach claim that the learners’ ability in the language improves more quickly than those studying the language in discrete language lessons, and

concurrently, their ability in the main subject is as good as those studying it in English.

The Languages Review (DfES 2007, 15) boosted the potential for adopting the CLIL approach with its recommendation to introduce ‘more stimulating and relevant content’ to the languages syllabus; ‘clear guidelines and support for a more appropriate and varied content to the secondary languages curriculum’ and ‘opportunities to think through how language learning can be integrated into parts of other learning (CLIL),..., so that the language can be used in motivating contexts without detriment to learning in the target discipline’ (DfES 2007, 16). Whilst some schools continued to develop the CLIL approach, it nevertheless still remains relatively innovative in England. However, fuelled by the growth of interest in CLIL as a means of delivery, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) funded projects in 2008-2010 to support eight networks, including collaborative work between a HEI, local authority, secondary schools and primary schools to develop approaches towards integrating the teaching of languages across the curriculum. The focus on CLIL was further strengthened by the publication of CLIL National Statement and Guidelines (2009). The preface to this document states that:

‘...there have never been so many systemic possibilities for CLIL approaches to prosper. In all parts of the school curriculum the emphasis is now on the integration of learning – on the links between subjects and the importance of subjects in enabling children to access new meanings and develop generic thinking skills. Within the languages curriculum the focus has moved away from the ubiquitous topic to the acquisition of language through ‘meanings that matter’ to learners. All of this favours the integration of content and language, of meaning and form’ (p4).

The UK is not a country known for its learning of foreign languages and recently ‘the major concern has undoubtedly been the apparent reluctance of the British to learn a foreign language at all, and the declining level of achievement in this domain’ (Williams et al. 2002, 503). The decision in England (DfES 2002) to remove the statutory requirement for all pupils to learn a foreign language at key stage 4 (ages 14-16) led to dramatic decreases in the number of KS4 pupils taking a language GCSE. Statistics reported by CILT (2009) show that 78% of KS4 pupils took a language at GCSE in 2001, 50% in 2006 and 44% in 2008 and 2009. This clearly demonstrates that, once the compulsory nature of language learning was removed,

learners increasingly opted not to study a language and to study subjects which appeared more attractive to them. Why should this be? According to Dearing's Languages Review (DfES 2007) MFL, as a general consensus, is perceived as a difficult, boring subject in which motivation and attainment is low. Barton (2006, 22) states that 'pupils' views on whether learning a language is relevant to their own lives is widely acknowledged to be a crucial factor in creating motivation to do well in the subject'.

Hood & Tobutt (2009, 211) claim that the integration of content through language would increase learners' motivation by increasing the level of authenticity and challenge and by encouraging the learner to view MFL along the same lines as other subjects in the curriculum, i.e. 'satisfying', 'challenging', 'motivating'.

Could the CLIL approach be an effective tool for motivating pupils in England to expand their foreign language learning to continue after the age of 14? Many arguments have been put forward to promote the CLIL approach as outlined above, but there has been little research into learners' perceptions.

Methodology

The project

The aim of the project was to develop and enhance CLIL practice in schools by designing training input for MFL trainee teachers during their one year initial teacher training programme.

This was led by the curriculum leader for languages at a Language College, belonging to the Partnership of schools used by the Higher Education Institution for school placements, where good practice in CLIL has been developed since 2001. Pupils in this school currently have an entitlement to learn one of their subjects, for example, Geography, Maths, Science or Music through French in year 7 (age 11-12). Data demonstrate that pupils achieve a higher than average level across the skills throughout year 7 in French and, in the subjects delivered through CLIL, pupils' achievement is in line with their expected target at the end of Year 7 and in some cases higher than in the other groups taught through English. Pupils with Special Educational Needs are particularly successful.

The training sessions on CLIL for MFL PGCE trainee teachers began with awareness raising initially and developed over time into the trainee teachers being required to teach and evaluate two CLIL lessons during their final placement. The trainee teachers received an initial in-service training session on the CLIL approach, a more detailed session on how to plan CLIL lessons, as well as a planning workshop before they embarked on the planning and teaching of CLIL lessons during the final placement. In 2008-9 the project was replicated in primary and secondary PGCE with training input and CLIL lessons in primary and secondary schools. The year culminated in a CLIL showcase event in June 2009 to celebrate primary and secondary PGCE trainee teachers' CLIL lessons in schools.

Research methodology

The focus of the research was to discover:

- What are pupils' perceptions of learning content through a language?
- How does the CLIL approach impact on learners' enjoyment, progress and motivation?

This study is principally concerned with the views and perceptions of learners and can therefore be located within the interpretivist tradition, which includes the beliefs that both the social world and the researcher have an impact on each other and that findings are inevitably influenced by the researcher (Ritchie & Lewis, 2006:17). The study could be categorised as an exploratory case study (Yin, 1994; Scott & Morrison, 2006). The definition of what comprises a 'case' and of the challenges of defining the boundaries of a 'case' have been deliberated at length (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Hitchcock & Hughes, (1995: 317) suggest that the case study approach focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events. They suggest (ibid.:319) that case studies are set in temporal, geographical, organisational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case. In this case the over-arching aim is to explore learners' perceptions of an innovative approach to learning content through a foreign language as adopted by trainee teachers whilst on placement in a range of partnership schools.

Data collection, sources and analysis

Following the training, secondary trainee teachers taught a minimum of two lessons using the CLIL approach in their final school placement. They were allowed a free

choice of year group and subject according to their school context and personal knowledge and preferences. As a result, a wide variety of approaches was chosen with lesson content in Food Technology, History, Geography, PSHE, Citizenship, Science, RE, Art and Philosophy to pupils in years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13 (pupils aged 11-18).

Data were collected in the summer term 2009 by means of a questionnaire, administered in school by the trainee teachers, to gain data about pupils' perceptions of their learning experience. Pupils were asked to complete the questionnaire which contained 9 statements for which they needed to tick boxes appropriately: I agree, I am unsure, I don't agree, as displayed in Table 1. They were also asked to respond to one open question: 'What were you most pleased with?' This allowed for the statistical data to be supported with qualitative responses of an interpretive nature.

Questionnaires from 13 secondary schools were returned with responses from 283 pupils from different year groups. The qualitative responses to the open question were grouped and explored thematically using a coding frame within the headings of the 9 statements to categorise the themes emerging from the responses to give depth and meaning to the reported statistics. However, as there was only one open question which sought positive views, the more negative views remain unsupported with qualitative responses.

Results from the student questionnaires

The questionnaire findings are examined in detail in this section following the structure of the questionnaire as outlined in Table 1, including the qualitative feedback from the open question in each theme.

Pupils' enjoyment

Initial findings indicate that pupils are positive about this approach. For example, 67% agreed with the statement 'I enjoyed the lesson', whilst 25% were unsure and 7% did not agree. Many pupils reported that they were pleased with everything, the whole lesson or that they liked it all equally. Others were more specific in comparing this approach to other lessons, commenting on the fact that it was 'interesting', 'fun and not boring like most French/Spanish lessons', that it was 'a good lesson, useful and not boring' and 'better than a normal lesson'. They found this different approach refreshing and described the lessons as 'different and exciting with exciting activities;

I enjoyed learning about other things' and 'more exciting than normal lessons, therefore it was fun'. Some pupils commented on aspects of the teaching saying they were most pleased with the way the lesson was set out and planned, 'the way they [the teachers] did the lesson because I got what I had to do', 'having the slide show to help you understand what was happening', 'learning a lesson through a different teacher's teaching style' and 'the technique of learning French, the way it was taught was fantastic!' One trainee teacher taught Food Technology in Spanish and pupils clearly enjoyed 'the smell of learning' as they watched their teacher cook a Spanish omelette, followed by their own cooking and tasting:

'It was like being in a Spanish kitchen, everyone was helping each other, but I enjoyed it because I could understand the recipe and the teacher'.

Clarity of learning objectives

The most positive response related to clarity of learning objectives where 70% agreed with the statement 'I was clear about the learning objectives', 24% were not sure and 7% did not agree. Many pupils commented on the sense of achievement in completing all the work and managing to understand the lesson: 'I enjoyed the lesson and understood what I was doing'.

Progress in the subject

60% of pupils agreed with the statement 'I made progress in the subject', 32% were not sure and 8% did not agree. In responses to the open question 'What were you most pleased with?' many pupils made reference to expanding their knowledge by learning different phrases and words in the target language as well as the content (examples as quoted - India, countries, continents, natural disasters, the Galapagos Islands, animals and environments, Science, child labour, shocking statistics, the Guernica picture, the French Revolution, religions). In some cases the transfer of knowledge helped the learning:

'We learnt about India which I know about so it was easier and fun'

'I actually understood therefore I found when I came to it in History, I knew what happened and more things that I didn't understand then made sense.'

Pupils were aware of what they had learnt and were pleased with the learning and knowledge gained:

'I learnt a lot of new words and some basic words I didn't know before'

‘I learned about the Galapagos Islands; never knew anything about it before; liked the booklet and learned new useful vocabulary’

‘I was able to learn about the islands and their animals whilst developing my language skills and working with other linguistically talented people’

‘I learnt some facts on child labour and some new Spanish words’.

In some cases they made a point of claiming that they had learnt more and this ties in with the fact they were learning both language and content. One pupil was pleased with

‘My translation and interpretation of the subject.’

One pupil commented that (s)he was most pleased with ‘Myself!’

Although there was no statement relating directly to challenge, challenge was an aspect which pupils commented on in response to the open question. Many were pleased with their ability to understand, follow and complete the work and

‘How easy learning this was; it was interesting and good.’

The trainee teachers were at pains to make the content comprehensible through accessible language using cognates, gestures and visuals. Pupils commented

‘how simple the lesson was set out, but challenging areas of tasks were good’

‘It was quite fun because we got involved more and had more fun; it was a little challenging but not impossible.’

The activities and the resources

Liking the activities clearly contributed to the enjoyment of learning content through language. Two out of three pupils (66%) agreed with the statement ‘I liked the activities’, 25% were not sure and 6% did not agree. 57% of pupils agreed with the statement ‘I liked the resources’, 34% were not sure and 8% did not agree.

Many pupils were pleased with the variety of different activities which added to the interest of the lesson (‘All the activities were different and varied so it wasn’t boring’), whilst some were more precise in describing the activities they liked, for example, working in groups and learning with other people, doing the presentation, the game with pictures around the room, debating, board games, the video, using cards. Many reported on the ‘fun’ element of the lesson:

‘The lesson was more fun and varied and the “physicalness” was fun’

‘It was fun and interesting.’

A number of the lessons involved some kind of design or creativity and pupils responded well to having an end product:

‘The animal design was fun’

‘I felt pleased with my monster’

‘The food/the eating’

‘Doing my Art picture’

‘The fact that I could learn more about the country’s culture by doing something creative.’

Learning through a language

64% of pupils agreed with the statement ‘I like learning through another language’, 22% were not sure and 13% did not agree. Many pupils made positive comments about learning two lessons at once:

‘I felt pleased I was learning 2 different subjects which was more rewarding’

‘I felt I learnt more through putting the 2 subjects together and it was a lot of fun’

‘That I learnt useful and important facts, but obtained them through another language’

‘Because it felt more exciting to be doing 2 lessons in 1.’

Many comments related to the satisfaction of being able to understand in the foreign language:

‘I liked trying to understand in Spanish rather than in English’

‘Watching a normal video meant for real Spanish speakers was good’

‘It was more interesting trying to follow the lesson through another language; it was more memorable than a normal language lesson, so I learnt more from it’

‘I was pleased by how I could follow instructions of what to do and I gained confidence’

‘That I studied another subject in a language I am still learning and I could follow it’

‘I liked the fun in it and that we had to work out what was being said’.

Many pupils enjoyed the fact that the whole lesson was in French or Spanish or German and that they learnt new words and coped with more difficult vocabulary.

They enjoyed the interactive nature of the lesson, speaking and taking part and developing language learning strategies and skills:

‘It was much more interactive and felt more relevant than just learning vocabulary; it helped my guessing skills as we did not know lots of the vocab.’

‘Using Spanish in a fun way to learn and it was different to usual, which is good; also I like getting involved in lessons more’

‘Learning French from a French national made the experience more enlightening.’

More concentration required to follow the lesson

58% of pupils agreed with the statement ‘I had to concentrate more to follow the lesson’, 28% were not sure and 13% did not agree. Some pupils said they had to concentrate more but it was fun, whilst others said it was much more fun than usual lessons so they concentrated more and got involved more. Working in the target language created greater focus. Responses were not wholly positive:

‘The lesson was ok and I think it will make people concentrate, but I think it is too much hassle.’

Greater motivation

Whilst there were many positive responses to enjoying lessons and activities learning content through language, less than half (43%) of pupils agreed with the statement ‘I felt more motivated’, 42% were not sure and 12% did not agree. This represented a significant difference from other responses where 67% enjoyed the lesson, 66% liked the activities, 64% liked learning through another language and 63% looked forward to learning in this way again. All these responses would indicate greater motivation, yet this is not what was reported by the learners. It would be easy to speculate that learners misunderstood the statement ‘I felt more motivated’. More motivated than in a language lesson, more motivated than in the subject lesson taught or more motivated than in another subject? The qualitative comments were all based on the question ‘What were you most pleased with?’ and no learner commented on motivation, although there were some comments that the CLIL lessons were not boring like most French/Spanish lessons.

This paper focuses on the learner responses, but to shed further light on this aspect, it may be helpful to report in brief the trainee teachers' perceptions of differences in pupil behaviour, attitude and motivation in CLIL lessons, also sought by means of a questionnaire and to be reported more fully in another paper. The trainee teachers' responses were all positive indicating an improvement in these areas. They testified that pupils were more focussed and had a better attitude; pupil behaviour was improved (they were quieter because they needed to listen and concentrate more to understand the task); pupils were more interested, more enthusiastic, more confident and showed greater enjoyment; pupils stayed on task more and weaker pupils were more engaged because the language was only a means to what they were really learning.

Looking forward to learning in this way again

Overall responses were positive about this new learning approach and pupils were keen to repeat the experience. 63% agreed with the statement 'I look forward to learning in this way again', 25% were not sure and 12% did not agree.

'I really enjoyed the debating and grasped it really well and learnt a lot; I hope we do it again sometime.'

Discussion

The theme of pupil voice has become more popular over recent years and there is a growing literature which encompasses the concept that pupils feel more positive about themselves as learners when their views are taken seriously (see, for example, MacBeath et al 2003 and Ruddock and Flutter 2004). Whilst the findings from this project cannot lead directly into changes as a number of schools were involved, nevertheless the importance of learners' views cannot be dismissed especially in the current climate where learners are choosing not to opt for languages at KS4. In a study on learners' views on National Curriculum subjects conducted by Wakefield and Pumphrey (2009), MFL was one of the subjects deemed by learners not to be interesting. By combining language learning with more interesting content there is the potential for this view to be changed.

Learner views in this study were certainly positive. There was a high level of enjoyment of lessons and they liked the activities. However, there was a bedrock of around 30% throughout who were unsure or disagreed with the statements. As there was only one open question which sought responses to what learners were most

pleased with, positive views are clearly represented whilst the less positive views are unheard. This is certainly a limitation to the current study and further in-depth research is required.

Coonan (2007) in research of teachers' self observation and introspection of the CLIL approach commented on the motivation of the learners being signaled as 'good' and in some cases 'excellent' by the teachers and poses the question: 'Could this be a result not only of the novelty of the situation but also of the effort the teachers put into making the lessons accessible and acceptable to the student?' (Coonan 2007, 642). The trainee teachers certainly went to great lengths to ensure that lesson content was accessible in terms of language and devised interesting activities to engage the learners. Coonan (2007) argues convincingly about the affective element which was clearly displayed in the lessons in the study: 'Teachers realise that it is not the quantity of the content to provide....but rather the learning of the content through a process that is enjoyable and involving. We see thus an affective element in the CLIL lesson, a desire to capture the students' engagement, to get him to participate actively (pair work, group work, teacher-student interaction, use of visuals, schemas, etc) in the lesson itself' Coonan (2007, 642).

The methodology used in these content lessons drew heavily on the methodology used by trainee teachers for teaching languages, for example, visuals and mimes to support meaning, a high level of interaction through pair and group work and a range of activities (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile) to support different learning styles. The trainee teachers made these choices in order to engage the learners in greater cognitive challenge. Coonan (2007, 643) believes that 'CLIL affects the way the learners learn the content because of the added extra cognitive burden represented by the presence of the L2; it affects (positively) the way learners learn the content because of the greater care the teachers seem to take to help them overcome the hurdles; it affects the way they learn the content (positively) because care is taken to nurture language growth through the content and the L1 is used as an instrument if needed to overcome learning difficulties.' Thus, although learners were learning content through a foreign language the majority were clear about the learning objectives and were able to make progress and enjoy learning through a language.

The push for more stimulating and relevant content and motivating contexts moves language learning on from language lessons which often only include low cognitive challenge (for example, describing one's family, school, bedroom). Coyle (2007) agrees with the claim that effective learning demands cognitive engagement irrespective of the learners' developmental level and that cognitively undemanding work, for example copying or repetition, especially when there is little or no context to support it, does not enhance language learning. Teaching content through language increases the cognitive challenge and leads to pupils using higher order thinking skills. Ting et al (2007, 6) state that 'the most convincing arguments to persuade subject/content teachers to teach their subjects in a FL is that speaking reflects thinking and that dealing with content in a FL will lift teachers' and students' level of thinking'. Coyle (2007, 554) also claims that '....the CLIL classroom demands a level of talking, of interaction and dialogic activity which may be different to that of the traditional language or content classroom.This suggests that CLIL learners need language to assist their thinking and they need to develop their higher-order thinking skills to assist their language learning.' Marsh and Langé (2002, 8) likewise maintain that CLIL promotes not only linguistic competence but also cognitive development and thinking skills:

'Because of the different "thinking horizons" which result from working in another language CLIL can also have an impact on conceptualisation, literally how we think. Being able to think about something in different languages can enrich our understanding of concepts, and help broaden our conceptual mapping resources. This allows better association of different concepts and helps the learner go towards a more sophisticated level of learning in general.'

Learners in this study responded well to the CLIL lessons; the majority enjoyed the lessons, the activities and the resources; they were clear about the learning objectives and felt that they made progress; and they liked learning through another language. The category which was less positive was feeling motivated. Just less than half of the pupils said they felt more motivated, yet there was qualitative evidence throughout of positive attitudes to the lessons. Further research is needed in this area to ascertain learning outcomes and whether more long-term experience can help to improve learners' attitudes to language learning and subsequently increase the take-up of languages through to KS4 and beyond.

References

- Anderson, G., & Arsenault, N. 1998. *Fundamentals of Educational Research* (2nd ed.). London: The Falmer Press.
- Barton, A. 2006. *Getting the Buggers into Languages*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- CILT. 2008. *Intensive and immersion courses*. Retrieved from <http://www.cilt.org.uk/14to19/intensive/>
- CILT. 2009. *CILT analysis of DCSF data: GCSE language entries trend analysis, 1994 to 2009*. Retrieved from http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/statistics/secondary_statistics/gcse_exam_entries.aspx 27.11.09
- CLIL Compendium. Retrieved from <http://www.clilcompendium.com/clilcompendium.htm>
- CLIL National Statement and Guidelines. 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.languagescompany.com/news/81-featured-news/97-clil-national-statement-and-guidelines-published-july-31.html>
- Commission of the European Communities. 2003. *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/official/keydoc/actlang/act_lang_en.pdf
- Coonan, C. M. 2007. Insider Views of the CLIL Class Through Teacher Self-Observation-Introspection. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. 10, no. 5: 625-646
- Coyle, D. 2007. Content and Language Integrated Learning: Towards a Connected Research Agenda for CLIL Pedagogies. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. 10. no. 5: 543-562
- Cummins, J. 1999. *Immersion education for the millennium: what have we learned from 30 years of second language immersion?* Retrieved from <http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/immersion2000.html>
- DfES. 2002. Green Paper: 14-19: extending opportunities, raising standards (DfES

- publications). Retrieved from <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19greenpaper/download.shtml>
- DfES. 2007. The Languages Review. Retrieved from http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/11124/LanguageReview.pdf
- Eurydice. 2006. CLIL at School in Europe. Retrieved from <http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/showPresentation?pubid=071EN>
- Eurydice. 2008. Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe. Retrieved from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/095EN.pdf
- Genesee, F. 1994. Integrating Language and Content: Lessons from Immersion. Educational Practice Reports. No 11. National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. 1995. *Research and the teacher: a qualitative introduction to school-based research* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hood, P. and Tobutt, K 2009. *Modern Languages in the Primary School*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- MacBeath, J., Demetriou, H., Rudduck, J. and Myers, K. 2003. *Consulting Pupils – A Toolkit for Teachers*. Cambridge: Pearson Publishing.
- Marsh, D. 2002. CLIL/EMILE – The European Dimension: Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential. European Commission: Public Services Contract DG EAC 3601: European Commission. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/david_marshall-report.pdf
- Marsh, D. and Langé G. (eds.) 2002. Using Languages to Learn and Learning to Use Languages. Milan TIE-CLIL. Retrieved from <http://www.clilcompendium.com/1uk.pdf>
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. 2006. *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage.

Rudduck, J. and Flutter, J. 2004. *Giving Pupils a Voice: How to*

Improve Your School London: Continuum Press.

Scott, D. & Morrison, M. 2006. *Key ideas in educational research*. London: Continuum.

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry. 2000. *Languages: the next generation*. London: The Nuffield Foundation.

Ting et al. 2007. A collective end-of-symposium reflection: The state of the art of CLIL and Future Prospects, AILA CLIL-Research Network Symposium, 20-22 September, 2007, retrieved from http://www.ichm.org/clil/pdfs/summary_symposium07.pdf

Wakefield, P. and Pumfrey, D. 2009. Illuminating and improving National Curriculum development: students' perceptions and suggestions. A pilot study in a state secondary school. *Educational Review*, 61, no.1, 63-83.

Williams, M., Burden, R., & Lanvers, U. 2002. French is the language of love and stuff: student perceptions of issues related to motivation in learning a foreign language. *British Educational Research Journal* 28, 503 – 528.

Yin, R. K. 1994. *Case study research: design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.